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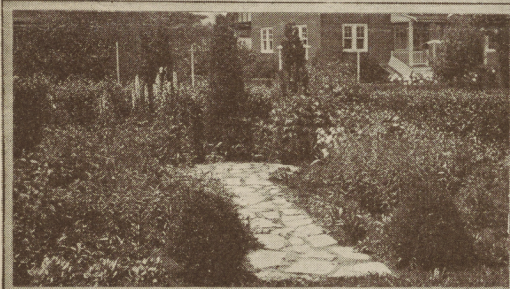
# BETTER PLANTS

*God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden*

VOLUME III

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1925

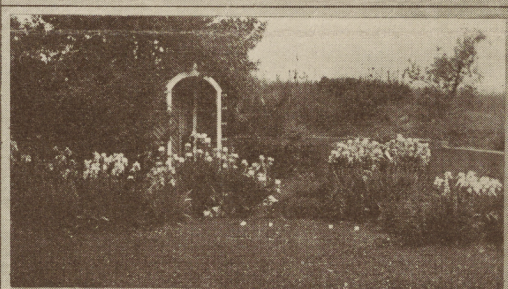
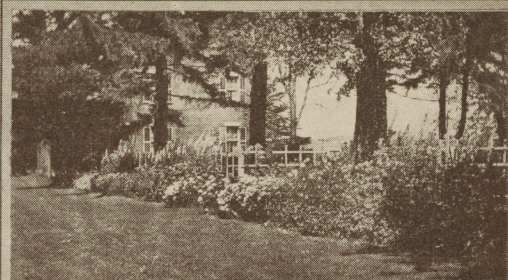
NUMBER 5



Our Manager is proud of the garden in which he has Aquilegias, Delphiniums, Campanulas, Physostegia, rare Irises and Peonies



This picture of Wyomissing Hybrid Delphiniums was made in Mr. Needham's garden in June of this year. The plants were set in the spring of 1924



Border of Perennials. Walter Elwood, Amsterdam, N. Y.  
Farr's Iris in the garden of M. B. Rutherford, Harrisburg, Pa.

## Fifteen Years with Iris

By John C. Wister

In the July-August issue of BETTER PLANTS Mr. Seyler gave a most interesting account of his six years' experience with iris, and he has asked me to supplement this with notes on selection of varieties based on my longer experience.

I believe I can do so in all modesty, because in the article referred to he has put in italics the following statement: "No one has a right to be positive or radical about iris until he has seen thousands of varieties in hundreds of different gardens and locations, and for a score of blooming seasons."

I am glad with this ideal in mind to tell of the changes I have seen in iris in the last fifteen years, and to note some of the varieties which seem particularly fine. I shall try to refrain from too positive statements until the five more years of experience prescribed by Mr. Seyler have come to pass! I am especially glad to write these notes for BETTER PLANTS because I secured my first collection of iris from Mr. Farr in 1910 and have been getting plants from his nursery ever since.

Named varieties of iris have been grown for more than a hundred years, but the last fifteen years have seen more progress than the entire century that preceded them. Varieties have changed so fast that the person who knew iris thoroughly in 1910 would today find his former knowledge practically valueless. It is true there were a few first class varieties in commerce, among them the true Pallida Dalmatica, Flavescens, Aurea, Mrs. Neubronner, Queen of May, Her Majesty,

Fairy, Mrs. H. Darwin, Jacquesiana, and some others, which today still remain important and will I believe continue to remain important for many years. These are exceptions, however, for most of the varieties which Mr. Farr imported from European sources between 1900 and 1910, and which he placed on the market in this country, have long since ceased to be worth continuing in our gardens. A few horrible examples such as Amabilis, Honorabilis, Swerti and Idion are really enough to show what irises were in those days. Even Mr. Farr's collection, which was the finest one in existence at that time, had a preponderance of varieties of poor, muddy or streaked coloring, all of the same blooming season and of little variance in height.

The changes that have come since 1910 in iris growing in America are tremendous. We have added to our gardens the entirely new class of Intermediates introduced by Caparne and by Goos & Koenemann as well as the Oncocyclis hybrids raised by Sir Michael Foster. In the Tall Bearded section we have added the famous Goos & Koenemann set—Iris King, Rhein Nixe, Lohengrin and Loreley; and the many hybrids of Amas, Trojana, Cypriana and Mesopotamica of which Alcazar, Ori-flamme, Lord of June and Lady Foster are examples. New iris breeders, such as Denis, Millet and Bliss in Europe, Mr. Farr, Miss Sturtevant, Mr. Fryer, Mr. Shull, Mr. Mohr, Mr. Williamson, and

many others in this country have become famous. Hundreds, almost thousands of varieties have been introduced, and those which were but slight advances over old types have dropped by the wayside, as still finer varieties came into existence.

As has been so clearly brought out in the American Iris Society Bulletins, particularly Bulletin No. 14, public appreciation of this improvement in iris was almost entirely due to Mr. Farr. His own seedlings played no small part in this development, and it is astonishing to think of what high quality his first introductions were, and how they have kept their place against all competition to the present day. This is particularly true of varieties like Juniata, Mt. Penn, Quaker Lady, Montezuma, and a few others. Let us grant that he introduced some varieties which are now no longer worth growing; this need not detract from his great achievements for it has been true of all iris breeders. Since the war he introduced such splendid varieties as Seminole, Cecil Minturn, Georgia, Mary Orth and Mildred Presby, which will hold their places at the top of their respective classes for many years to come. Today there are growing in his nursery many very fine seedlings which will be named and introduced within the next few years.

Mr. Farr's success, of course, encouraged others to raise irises from seed, until at present we have more breeders of iris in this country than in all the other countries in the world combined. It is just this fact which makes so pertinent





Three winners—Wyomissing Hybrid Delphiniums and "Somebody's Stenog."

#### FIFTEEN YEARS WITH IRIS

Mr. Seyler's statement in regard to new varieties, namely that "they cannot all be distinct and worth while." It is, as he states, impossible for any one nursery, or any one grower, to have them all, but I am glad to see that the present managers of the Farr Nursery Company are continuing Mr. Farr's policy of listing the best and discarding the superseded kinds. Action like this is necessary in every nursery; if all nurserymen would do it promptly, the public would have greater confidence in buying new varieties. As it is, many of my friends are saying that they do not expect to buy new varieties until they see them, thus showing a lack of confidence in the breeder and the nurseryman. I hope that the definite position taken by the Farr Nursery Company in discarding all superseded kinds and growing only the best, will bring confidence to the buying public that they may trust varieties offered there.

Considering the changes of the last fifteen years, I should like to call attention to the following kinds, selected from many hundreds as the best in their respective types. Some of them may be fairly new, but none are too new to be fairly judged. I will consider them in the order given in the American Iris Society color classification.

Blue is the popular iris color and it is in the lavender blues and lavender purples that the greatest number of varieties occur. First of all we should select the true *Pallida Dalmatica* or *Princess Beatrice*, one of the oldest iris in existence and still absolutely unequaled. For an earlier variety I can recommend *Mandraliscae*, or one of its newer relatives, such as *Miranda*, *Mrs. Tinley* and *Lady Charles Allom*. These with *Commodore*, *Rosedale* and *Parc de Neuilly* give us a good selection;

to continue into the deepest purples we can add *Souv. de Mme. Gaudichau*, which is one of the finest iris ever raised.

On the pink side of the lavender colors no one will want to do without the old *Queen of May*, but with it should be grown such modern varieties as *Aurora*, *Cecil Minturn*, *Dream*, *Susan Bliss*, *Georgia*, and going up into the reddish scale *Caprice* and *Edouard Michell*. Mr. Farr's *Rose Unique* still stands unique among pink iris as the first to open. For a later variety of this general coloring *Roseway* can be recommended. In still deeper colors come *Seminole*, *Elberon*, *Morning Splendour* and *Robert Wallace*.

Among bicolors in the lavenders there is the same huge list to choose from. I should like to mention in the lighter colors *Crusader*, *Lord of June* and *Sweet Lavender*, while among the darker ones *Sarpedon* is probably still unsurpassed. For those who like the old *Neglecta* type of flower with its many veins, *Hiawatha* is probably the best, but I much prefer the more solid colors of *Azure*, *Eckesachs*, *Mrs. Fryer* and *Rheintraube*. Classified near these but with deeper purple and reddish tones are *Archeveque*, *Opera* and *Cretonne* which are indispensable in any garden.

In yellows the greatest advances have been made, but *Aurea*, *Flavescens*, and *Mrs. Neubronner* are still important. To them should be added *Miss Sturtevant's* splendid *Shekinah* and others of the *Shekinah* race, which are constantly becoming more popular. Close to these are the blended yellows, such as *Minnehaha* and *Montezuma*. Then come the popular yellow and brown *Variegatas* of which so many inferior sorts are to be seen; they should probably all be discarded in favor of *Flammenschwert*, *Iris King*, *Loreley*, *Fro*, and *Mithras* or the taller more striped type as represented in *Kathryn Fryer* and *Argynnis*.

Mr. Farr's *Quaker Lady* was the first of the blended varieties to become popular. There are many varieties today on this general order from the pale *Afterglow* on the one side to the deeper *Steepway*, *Mme. Durand* and *Mme. Cherie*. *Mary Garden* was the first of the many blended *Plicatas*. Among novelties in this section may be recommended *Mme. Chobaut*.

Old iris lists were full of varieties of the general type of *Sambucina*, *Dr. Bernice* and *Jacquesiana*. The first two of these are no longer worth growing, but *Jacquesiana* holds its place, and will, I think, for many years. In this type may also be grown *Dora Longdon*, *Dusky Maid*, *Col. Candelot*, *Navajo*, *Prosper Laugier*, and such outstanding varieties as *Ambassadeur*, *Alcazar*, *Prospero*, *Lent A. Williamson* and *Asia*.

Our gardens need many more white varieties than are seen. In fact I think the greatest mistake that is commonly made in iris gardens is the free planting of deep colored varieties, with a lack of sufficient numbers of pale blue, yellow and white. Pure white varieties have always been scarce and the ideal variety has not yet been produced. For those who can grow it there is nothing finer than *Kashmir White*, but this variety is not to be recommended for the ordinary garden, as it is often a shy bloomer and a poor grower.

Therefore we must fall back on such varieties as *White Knight*, and *Fairy*, while we wait to see if the much heralded *Balaruc* and *White Queen* are really better than these two. We can also use many of the *Plicatas*. Here *Anna Farr* stands out as one of the finest in existence, but unfortunately it is not always a good grower. *Ma Mie* can be highly recommended, and for a variety with a little darker marking *Pocahontas* is still unsurpassed. White effects in the garden can also be had from varieties with purple falls, of which *Rhein Nixe* is typical. Into this class probably would fall *Mary Williamson* and the splendid *Mildred Presby*.

I have not attempted to mention any of the really new things and have tried to confine myself to the standard things or fairly new varieties, which have proved their position without any doubt. Choice of iris varieties must always remain a matter of personal taste. Those I have mentioned above are good growers and good bloomers, and seem to me the best in their respective types of the varieties which are today available at reasonable prices. It is folly to expect the average gardener to pay the prices at which *Bruno* and *Swazi* are now held; no iris grower should, however, feel discouraged by those high prices, as they will come down quickly as the plants increase in number; in the meantime other people will have tested them to see if they are worth while or not.

It is extremely encouraging that a commercial nursery like the *Bertrand H. Farr Company* should align itself solidly with the *American Iris Society* in trying to prevent the introduction of iris seedlings which are either not distinct from existing sorts or not superior to them. Too many such varieties have appeared the last few years and people who bought them have felt cheated when they bloomed. I hope that the policy of the *Farr Company* will bring to it public confidence that the varieties they offer have been well tested, and that they are worth while and not mere repetitions of varieties that have gone before.



*Sempervivum* (Hens and Chickens) are useful in wall crevices and dry places



## BETTER PLANTS

Published Bi-monthly by

Bertrand H. Farr—  
Wyomissing Nurseries Co.ANNA WILLIS FARR, President  
L. W. NEEDHAM, General Manager  
H. G. SEYLER, Treasurer and Editor  
C. M. BOARDMAN, L.A., Landscape Dept.

Vol. 3 SEPT.-OCT., 1925 No. 5

## NOW AND THEN

Three tablespoonfuls of Rochelle salt obtainable at the drug store and added to the roots of delphiniums are a wonderful stimulant and cleanser. Try it.

We are still short or sold out of Iris Cardinal, Duke of Bedford, Swazi, Anna Farr, Mildred Presby, Catalosa and Georgia. We must be frank in confessing that on the first three varieties our 1925 price was set too low and the demand exhausted the supply within the first two weeks after the catalog was issued.

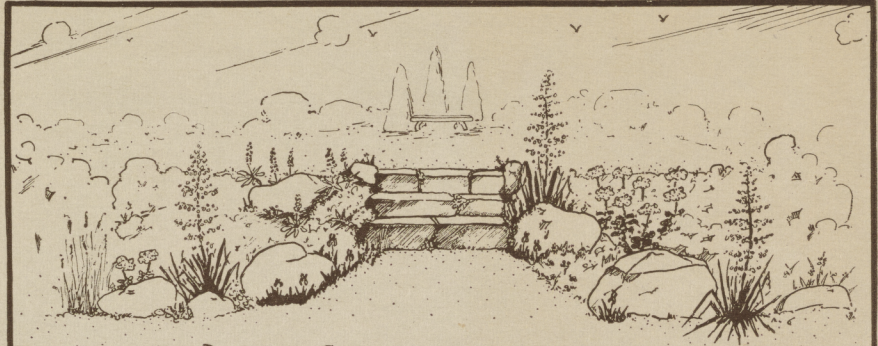
The early single and double Dutch tulips have too short stems for cutting. Breeder, Cottage and Darwin are the best. Plant not earlier than September 1 and not later than December. Do not permit tulips to go to seed. It weakens the bulb. When finished blooming, do not cut off leaves. They are necessary for ripening the bulb.

This was the best year in many for yellow peonies. Our stocks of Peony lutea, Souvenir de Maxime Cornu and La Lorraine are gradually but surely increasing, and in a few years there may be enough to offer in the general catalog. People who have not yet seen these yellow tree peonies have a rare treat in store for them.

On a recent lecture trip, we met a lady who, before the war, had invested in Farr peonies for cut-flowers. It was not necessary for this lady to invest for profit, and she was interested mostly in something to do. She confessed that since the war, and because labor was scarce, she had not given the peonies much attention, but at that they were the most profitable crop of the many with which she experimented.

How would you like to have iris for house bloom during January and February? It is quite easy if you take the time and trouble to lift a few plants and pot them just before the ground freezes. Keep them in a cool dark place and well-watered until the roots have taken hold. Then, bring them into warmth and sunlight in successive stages. They are easier to force into bloom than most any other perennial.

For delphinium rot try the following mixture: Four pounds of lump lime, one pound of powdered tobacco dust, one gallon of water to slake the lime. Let this mixture boil as long as it will and add more water to complete the slake. When it has ceased to boil, add enough water to make five gallons. In applying, use one quart of solution to eleven quarts of water. Pour cupful around the roots of each plant. Repeat every ten days if necessary.



## ROCK GARDEN COLLECTION

- |                                                        |                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 5 Erect Stonecrop - <i>Sedum spectabile</i> @ .22 each | 5 Maiden Pink - <i>Dianthus Deltoides</i> @ .22 |
| 5 Goldentuft - <i>Alyssum sax. comp.</i> @ .22         | 5 Dwarf Stonecrop - <i>Sedum Stehli</i> @ .22   |
| 5 Mountain Pink - <i>Phlox subulata</i> @ .22          | 1 Ornamental Grass - <i>Miscanthus</i> @ .22    |
| 5 Plantain Lily - <i>Hosta lancifolia</i> @ .22        | 6 Dwarf Iris - <i>Iris atroviolacea</i> @ .15   |
| 2 Saxifrage - <i>Saxifraga</i> @ .60                   | 5 Alum Root - <i>Heuchera white</i> @ .22       |
| 3 Adam's Needle - <i>Yucca fil.</i> @ .50              | 5 Spiderwort - <i>Tradescantia</i> @ .22        |
| 5 Houseleek - <i>Sempervivums</i> @ .22                | 3 Snow-in-Summer - <i>Cerastium</i> @ .30       |

Above COLLECTION of 60 plants amounting to \$14.70 will be furnished complete for \$12.50 P.P.D. prepaid. Safe arrival guaranteed. Shipment on approval. Two collections - \$22.50  
Three collections - \$30.00

Anna M. Boardman Landscape Architect

We have heard and noticed criticism about some of the new iris. Some folks say they are too fragile and floppy. At the same time, there are a great many new varieties of large size and good substance. The fact remains that a good large iris is better than a good little one.

The best time to transplant lily of the valley is late summer. The roots should be separated, so there will be about six shoots to a clump, and set with the buds about 2 inches below the surface of the ground. The roots need to be dug and reset once in four years, otherwise the blossoms will be few and of poor quality.

As the Farr novelties and specialties come into bloom, we check, test and compare them. Inferior varieties are discarded and propagating lists are then prepared as a guide for the future. The slogan of "Better Plants—By Farr" is a constant incentive, and the policy of propagating and selecting only the best varieties will keep us busy and give us opportunity for living up to the slogan, so long as we remain in business.

Birds are the best possible insecticides we know of. Entice birds into your garden by growing berry-bearing shrubs, and establishing a bird fountain, bird houses, and bird feeding stations. If every suburban dweller in this country would follow these suggestions the annual insect and insecticide bills would be sharply reduced. The editor's attitude toward cats is not at all compromising. He believes in killing every stray cat on the spot. People are entitled to their pets, but they should be sure that the pets are properly fed with other ingredients than birds and game. While an ardent hunter, the editor has always held the trigger when birds were flushed.

## THE ROCK GARDEN

No phase of gardening has developed so rapidly in recent years as that of rock gardening. Only a few seasons ago a garden of this type was a rarity. Today thousands of garden enthusiasts are finding new delights in developments of this kind. All kinds of situations may be used for such a garden, and often ground which is difficult to care for may be turned into a beauty spot.

In constructing a rock garden it is desirable to use well-weathered field stone, or moss-covered stone from streams. Avoid harsh lines; try to place the stones naturally, so that they will look as if "they belonged." Do not use many small stones. A dozen large rocks are better than fifty small stones.

Differences in level are always good, and give an opportunity for steps which may be a feature of the design. Rock gardens are often constructed on sloping banks, thus changing a difficult grade into a real object of beauty. I have seen several small rock gardens developed as an entrance feature on either side of the steps to the main flower garden.

Practically all varieties of rock plants have good foliage throughout the season, and many are among the earliest of our spring flowers. If your space is limited, no phase of perennial planting will give you such a great return in flowers and interest. Start in a small way, and I venture to say that you will want to develop more each year.

Choose a sunny site, if possible, as better results will be obtained. Do not use too many varieties, but rather use large masses of a few kinds. Our Landscape Department is always glad to answer questions and suggest varieties. Please feel free to write us.—CHARLES M. BOARDMAN, Landscape Architect.



## BETTER PLANTS



### FOUR REASONS WHY YOUR ORDERS AND INQUIRIES ARE HANDLED ACCURATELY AND INTELLIGENTLY

In a previous issue of *BETTER PLANTS* we illustrated and explained the reasons why Farr plants are so popular. Here is an illustration of why Farr orders and correspondence are handled accurately and intelligently.

Number one (on the right and underneath the clock) is Miss Anna Moter, whose signature on our correspondence many of you are familiar with. Miss Moter's association with the Nursery dates back to 1916. Since 1919 she has served in the capacity of corresponding secretary. Miss Moter typewrites her letters as she composes them, and since 1919 has written at least twenty-five thousand personal letters. In handling correspondence she makes her own decisions and uses her own initiative. Her interest and experience are not entirely confined to plant matters, and her outlook and view point are broadened by interests in the Woman's Club and Choral Society, and her accomplishments as a pianist.

Our "Charles" (Mr. Rathman) is a self-made Farr product who has advanced from the apprentice position of label-writer, errand boy and "pinch hitter" to the important position of handling all the

Farr accounting. Mr. Rathman came to us in 1916, fresh from business school, and modestly contented himself with minor details and apprenticeship until 1920. He was then coached on our accounting system until he is now solely and entirely responsible for the accuracy and execution of Farr accounting. Because of his long time association, it is seldom that he cannot instantly remember any of our regular customers. Rathman's errors and collection blunders are few and far between.

"Somebody's Stenog." (nearest to the calendar dated April 15th), is Miss Beulah Keim, who also has an unbroken record of six years of Farr service. Miss Keim handles the dictation of the editor, general manager and the landscape department. In addition, she also finds time to handle the bulk of our billing and statement routine and assists or substitutes in booking orders. Her experience and interest frequently detect errors and ungrammatical dictation.

The lady in front of our intricate

Elliott-Fisher Duplex Manifold Machine is also a "Louise Homer" on the side. Miss Esther Miller is an ardent vocal student and a soloist of no mean local reputation and ability. Since 1919 Miss Miller has checked, booked, corrected, acknowledged and billed very close to one hundred thousand orders. I doubt whether any of you who read this article have ever experienced a calculating error or a price error on your order. Miss Miller is so conscientious that it spoils her day to experience an error or a mix-up, even if it was caused by the customer's oversight.

In summary, the quartette illustrated represents one of our most valuable Farr assets. We trust that you will be impressed by the looks and records of these four hustlers, and that you will be interested in knowing that an experienced and intelligent office force are a part of Farr service.

### 1925 SUNRISE COLLECTIONS OF SPRING BLOOMING BULBS

#### An Economical and Easy Opportunity

50 Narcissi in mixture.....	\$2 50
50 Single Early Tulips, Assorted..	2 75
50 Darwin Tulips, Assorted.....	2 75
50 Breeder Tulips, Assorted.....	2 75
50 Cottage Tulips, Assorted.....	2 75
50 Double Early Tulips, Assorted..	2 75
20 Hyacinths, Mixed.....	3 75
100 Crocuses, Mixed.....	1 50

\$21 50

**Complete 1925 Sunrise Collection** (420 bulbs) for **only \$18**, parcel post prepaid.

This collection, if desired in half quantities, for \$9.50 complete.

No further discount except 2 per cent for cash with order.

If any one or two parts of this collection are not desired, they may be deducted at cost. Example—1925 Sunrise Collection, excluding Cottage Tulips, would amount to \$18 less \$2.75, or \$15.25.

BETTER PLANTS—September-October, 1925  
Iris and Perennial Edition

Charles F. Gersdorff  
1825 N Capitol St.  
Washington D C

Farr Nurseries Co., Wyomissing, Pa.  
Return Postage Guaranteed by

### OWNING IRIS BY THE THOUSAND

Picture a thousand plants of iris

blooming in a garden, an estate, a field

or a meadow. Perhaps you think the

cost of owning such a collection is out of

proportion to the benefit derived. Look

at these prices: If you have the planting

space your pride of ownership and buying

instinct will urge you to buy—now.

We will furnish a complete range of

color, our selection of varieties, at the

following prices:

1,000 in 10 varieties.....\$75 00

1,000 in 20 varieties.....87 50

1,000 in 40 varieties.....100 00

1,000 in 100 varieties.....112 50

100 in 10 varieties.....12 50

100 in 20 varieties.....17 50

100 in 50 varieties.....22 50

These prices are possible only when the

selection is left to us. Prices in miscella-

neous quantities on request. We guarantee

effect will be equal to that of the highest

priced irises.